United Nations A/65/PV.78

General Assembly
Sixty-fifth session

Official Records

78th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 15 March 2011, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Earthquake and tsunami in Japan

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like, on behalf of the General Assembly, to express our sincere compassion and deep sympathy to the Government and people of Japan, which were profoundly affected last Friday by one of the gravest natural disasters in the country's history.

A month ago, the General Assembly held a thematic debate on risk prevention. Since then, reality — in the form of the earthquake in New Zealand and now the disaster affecting Japan — has reminded us of the importance of prevention and of the difficulty of predicting every danger. Even Japan, one of the best prepared countries, can be devastated.

We do not yet know the extent of the human losses and material damage caused by the major earthquake and the ensuing tsunami that struck Japan. Nevertheless, we are all shocked and concerned, because through Japan, the whole region and the entire world are affected.

The international community must therefore show solidarity and provide assistance to the Japanese people and Government so as to help them to overcome this very difficult ordeal as quickly as possible. Our efforts should also extend to the other countries of the region that were affected by the catastrophe.

In memory of the victims and as a sign of solidarity with the people and Government of Japan, I now invite the Assembly to stand and observe a minute of silence.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The President (*spoke in French*): Members will recall that the General Assembly concluded its consideration of agenda item 27 at its 71st plenary meeting, on 21 December 2010. In order to enable the General Assembly to consider draft resolution A/65/L.63, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 27.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 27?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in French*): Representatives will also recall that, at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 17 September 2010, the General Assembly allocated sub-item (b) of agenda item 27 to the Third Committee. In order for the Assembly to proceed expeditiously on this sub-item, may I take it that the Assembly agrees to consider it directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

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The President (*spoke in French*): May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 27?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 27 (*continued*)

Social development

(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

Draft resolution A/65/L.63

The President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the representative of Hungary, who wishes to speak in explanation of position before the Assembly takes action on the draft resolution.

Ms. Kovács (Hungary): I have the honour to deliver this statement in explanation of position on behalf of the European Union (EU).

The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia; the European Free Trade Association country member of the European Economic Area, Norway; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

Allow me to start by thanking Mr. Jean-Francis Régis Zinsou, Ambassador of Benin, for his efforts in facilitating the draft resolution entitled "Organization of the High-level Meeting on Youth" (A/65/L.63).

The EU firmly believes that the United Nations High-level Meeting should be a forum in which adequate youth participation is guaranteed, including non-governmental organizations and youth-led organizations. The EU appeals to Governments to include in their delegations youth representatives who are transparently selected and suitably entitled to represent the young people of their countries.

In that regard, the European Union regrets that agreed language in the Commission for Social Development resolution entitled "Policies and programmes involving youth", adopted just three weeks ago, could not be incorporated into today's text.

The EU once again wishes to underline the importance of a High-level Meeting that includes rather than excludes youth representatives, whose inputs are to be taken into consideration. Therefore, we are convinced that young people should be given adequate time and sufficient opportunities to speak and to draw our attention to the concerns, problems and challenges that they face. We should also be able to discuss how to develop new opportunities for young people. It is impossible to ignore, for example, the role that new technologies can play in ensuring employment and in fighting poverty and underdevelopment. The EU was surprised that its proposal to reflect that element in the theme for round table 2 was met with opposition.

Our position on this issue has been further reinforced by the latest developments in North Africa and the Middle East, which demonstrate that we actually have to listen to the wishes and demands of youth. In that context, we deem it essential that young people be empowered and given the opportunity to become active citizens who participate in decision-making, especially on those issues that concern them.

The European Union attaches great importance to the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (resolution 50/81, annex) as the most relevant United Nations document dealing with youth issues. That document should guide us in our discussions during the negotiations of the Meeting's outcome, as well as during the High-level Meeting itself. We firmly believe that the World Programme of Action for Youth should be fully implemented and viewed as the main point of reference, not in the least because it was adopted by the General Assembly by consensus in 1995 and supplemented, also by consensus, in 2007 (see resolution 62/126). We think that creating a framework for our discussions, comprising the World Programme of Action on Youth, other relevant programmes of action and internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, would help us to prioritize the various issues.

While the European Union did not wish to break consensus on this important draft resolution, we regret that the issues to which I have referred could not be more clearly reflected in document A/65/L.63.

Before I conclude, allow me to draw the kind attention of all representatives to our basic position. The conference should be not only a meeting about

youth issues, but also a meeting with young people and, above all, for them and for their future. We must ensure that their voices are heard before, during and after the conference. The EU will endeavour to continue to work actively to promote such a process and outcome and we encourage other delegations to do likewise. It is easily said that young people are our future; now, it is time to act upon that.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/65/L.63, entitled "Organization of the High-level Meeting on Youth".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/65/L.63?

Draft resolution A/65/L.63 was adopted (resolution 65/267).

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to speakers who wish to explain their position on the resolution just adopted.

Mr. Vigny (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland thanks the facilitator of the negotiating process for having reached a hard-won consensus on this resolution on the organization of the High-level Meeting on Youth, which is of special importance given the role played by young people in events of recent weeks in several countries around the world.

Two representatives of the Swiss National Youth Council figured in our delegation during the negotiations. Together with other youth representatives, they voiced their opinions on modalities of organization of the High-level Meeting in a letter sent to you, Mr. President, with a copy to the facilitator of our negotiating process.

For Switzerland, it is therefore important that youth representatives in the official delegations at the High-level Meeting be included following a transparent selection process, ensuring that they truly represent the mass of young people in their countries without any political considerations. Moreover, the free participation of youth organizations, civil society organizations, including non-governmental organizations, and the private sector is vital if the meeting is to have added value.

During the negotiations, we declared our clear preference at the outset for the outcome of the conference to be recorded in a summary by the President of the General Assembly. We accepted the drafting of an outcome document of the Meeting on the sole condition that it take into account the opinions of youth organizations and agree with the World Programme of Action for Youth and the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

The President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote.

I should like to express here my sincere thanks to Ambassador Jean-Francis Régis Zinsou of Benin, who so effectively and patiently conducted the discussions and complex negotiations in the informal consultations in order to bring them to a successful conclusion. I am sure that members of the Assembly join me in extending to him our sincere appreciation.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 27.

It was so decided.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The President (*spoke in French*): I invite the attention of the General Assembly to the draft decision contained in document A/65/L.61, issued under sub-item (a) of agenda item 74, "Oceans and the law of the sea".

Members will recall that the General Assembly concluded its consideration of agenda item 74 at its 59th plenary meeting on 7 December 2010. In order to enable the General Assembly to consider the draft decision, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 74.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 74?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in French*): May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 74?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 74 (*continued*)

Oceans and the law of the sea

(a) Oceans and the law of the sea

Draft decision (A/65/L.61)

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take action on draft decision A/65/L.61.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft decision A/65/L.61?

Draft decision A/65/L.61 was adopted.

The President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 74.

It was so decided.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly has before it a report of the Fifth Committee on sub-item (b) of agenda item 113, entitled "Appointment of members of the Committee on Contributions", contained in document A/65/563/Add.1.

In order for the Assembly to consider the report of the Fifth Committee, it will be necessary to reopen consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 113.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 113?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in French*): To enable the General Assembly to take up expeditiously the report of the Fifth Committee, may I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 113?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 113 (*continued*)

Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments

(b) Appointment of members of the Committee on Contributions

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/65/563/Add.1)

The President (*spoke in French*): If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Fifth Committee that is before it today.

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in French*): Before we begin to take action on the recommendation contained in the report of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee.

The Fifth Committee recommends in paragraph 3 of its report that the General Assembly appoint Mr. Patrick Haughey of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Mr. Sun Xudong of China as members of the Committee on Contributions for a term of office beginning today, 15 March 2011, and ending on 31 December 2011.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint Mr. Patrick Haughey of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Mr. Sun Xudong of China as members of the Committee on Contributions for a term of office beginning on 15 March 2011 and ending on 31 December 2011?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in French*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 113?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 3.30 p.m.